



Capital Planning Committee

Capital Plan for FY2022 (July 1, 2021 – June 30, 2022) 5-Year Plan for FY2022 – FY2026

Date: Thursday, September 9, 2021

Time: 5:00pm-7:00pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

Minutes

Attendance: Joseph Barr,
Ida Cody,
Kate Leary,
Kate Loosian,
Phyllis Marshall,
Michael Mason
Chris Moore,
Sandy Pooler,
Jon Wallach,
Julie Wayman, Management Analyst,
Timur Kaya Yontar.

Not in attendance: None.

Meeting Opened: Mr. Yontar called the meeting to order at 5:04pm.

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the meeting of June 17, 2021 were reviewed and approved by the following vote:

Joseph Barr: Yes,
Ida Cody: Yes,
Kate Leary: Yes,
Kate Loosian (seconded motion for approval): Yes,
Phyllis Marshall: Yes,
Michael Mason: Abstain,
Chris Moore (made motion for approval): Yes
Sandy Pooler: Yes,
Jon Wallach: Yes,

Timur Kaya Yontar: Yes.

Membership: Mr. Yontar explained that the Committee currently has 11 members due to Ms. Olszewski stepping down, and we have not yet found a replacement for her despite advertising and reaching out to potential new members. If a new potential member is identified soon, they could be added to the Committee now, but if it takes too long, we will wait until the next budget year to add another member. Mr. Yontar also reviewed the current membership terms, appointment status, and Committee officers as described in the attachment to the agenda. Ms. Wayman also reminded Committee members of the required state ethics training.

Schedule: As in past years, the Committee will meet on the first, third, and fifth Thursday of the month; the next meetings will be September 30th and October 7th. This three-week gap will provide an opportunity to get some momentum on the committee reports. Mr. Yontar went through the list of upcoming Committee meetings and noted that there will be a meeting on February 17th, 2022 that was not noted on the schedule.

Key Deliverables: Mr. Yontar reviewed the three main deliverables produced by the Committee, which are the FY23 capital budget recommendation to the Town Manager, the presentation to the Finance Committee, and the written report to Annual Town Meeting.

Capital Budget Development Process: Mr. Yontar led a discussion of the initial assessment of how tight the capital budget is likely to be based on current commitments and other known information about upcoming projects. He also discussed the prioritization that has been requested from department heads to help inform the Committee about their relative priorities.

Subcommittee Structure: Mr. Yontar reviewed the subcommittee structure, which is the same as last year with the exception that Ms. Olszewski is no longer on the Administration Subcommittee (but the other members of that Subcommittee felt that they could handle the departmental reviews without an additional member being added at this time). Mr. Moore noted that the Software Subcommittee will continue to work on trying to simplify the software/process that is used for the financial calculations in the plan and avoid the need to do calculations in MS Access.

Subcommittee Meetings with Department Heads: Mr. Yontar reviewed the materials that were provided to department heads as background to the capital plan development process, as well as the report template for Subcommittee. Mr. Yontar asked Ms. Wayman if she could add the departmental capital project requests into that template as a starting point for the meetings with department heads, which she said she would do. The Committee also discussed the need for coordination on projects that involve IT, Facilities, and the Community Presentation Act Committee (CPAC), and Mr. Yontar noted that Ms. Leary is the new liaison to CPAC.

Review of Town Meeting: Mr. Yontar noted that the discussion of the capital budget at Town Meeting went well—even with the additional funding request for the DPW facility—and the capital budget was approved with over 90% support.

Update Existing Projects: Mr. Pooler provided the Committee with an update on existing projects:

- The DPW project is starting with renovations to the existing buildings to allow for IT staff and servers to be moved out of the high school building on time (given the status of that construction process). Progress will start to occur in other areas this fall and next spring.
- Work is ongoing on Whittemore Park in the Town center and work has been completed on the plaza in front of Town Hall.
- Work on the Mystic Street bridge is also now ready to move forward, after the prior delays.

Fiscal Environment Overview: Mr. Yontar and Mr. Pooler provided an overview of the current fiscal environment:

- The Town is set to receive \$34M in federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). Proposed uses of the funds include a \$2.75M request for HVAC for Town and school facilities, which addresses a major need in the plan. However, this short-term funding doesn't solve for the long-term structural deficit, so an override is still coming at some point soon.
- There continues to be a lot of pressure on the capital budget. We cannot currently fit library facilities within the five-year plan, and roads and playgrounds continue to be a pressure point.
- Ms. Leary provided a summary of the recent discussion about funding for playgrounds and recreational facilities. The main request from the Recreation Department is that there is some reliable amount of money from the capital plan to help fund these projects. The discussion also covered the difference between the CPAC planning timeframe (1 year), the CPC planning timeframe (5 years), and the longer-term planning that the Recreation Department does. There was also some discussion about switching to a different planning and design process for school playgrounds that may be less parent-driven that will result in more predictable outcomes. Ms. Leary also noted the results of the recent playground safety audits that led to the temporary closures of some facilities. Mr. Moore asked whether this is going to lead to additional capital needs that the Committee is going to need to address, which does appear to be likely (but is still not completely known).
- Mr. Barr made a suggestion of trying to have a CPAC create longer term projections for how much funding will be available and what projects might be funded in future years, recognizing that this can be challenging given the uncertainty about the state match. Other Committee members were supportive of moving in this direction over time.
- Mr. Barr asked for more details about potential future plans for an override. Mr. Pooler indicated that operating budget deficits will start to appear in FY24 and get much larger in FY25, which will then require an override to address. He indicated

that increases in state aid may help somewhat, but it seems likely that will not enough funding to fully address the upcoming gap.

Review of FY23 Capital Budget Requests: Ms. Wayman provided a quick overview of the major requests from departments. Mr. Yontar said that the Public Safety Subcommittee will work on getting reports ready for the Fire Department and the Police Department for the September 30th meeting. Other subcommittees should figure out the schedule for presenting their reports, and Mr. Yontar encouraged other Subcommittees to try to have at least one other report ready for the September 30th meeting.

New Business: None.

Meeting Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 6:23pm, based on the following vote:

Joseph Barr: Yes,
Ida Cody: Yes,
Kate Leary: Yes,
Kate Loosian (made motion to approve): Yes,
Phyllis Marshall: Yes,
Michael Mason: Absent,
Chris Moore (seconded motion to approve): Yes,
Sandy Pooler: Yes,
Jon Wallach: Yes,
Timur Kaya Yontar: Yes.